

1    ABSTRACT

2           The present invention provides an apparatus and method for  
3    automated and rapid loading of a large number of samples for mass  
4    spectrometric analysis using various ionization methods (e.g.  
5    matrix assisted desorption by laser bombardment (MALDI) and  
6    atmospheric pressure ionization (API) methods such as  
7    electrospray).    The apparatus utilizes microtiter plates to hold  
8    the sample, optical elements (e.g. fiber optic) to facilitate  
9    automated transport of the ions, and a multiple part capillary  
10   comprising at least two capillary sections joined with airtight  
11   seal by a union for use in mass spectrometry (particularly with  
12   ionization sources) to transport ions between pressure regions of  
13   a mass spectrometer for analysis is described herein. Preferably,  
14   the capillary is useful to transport ions from an elevated  
15   pressure ionization source to a first vacuum region of a mass  
16   analysis system.